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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0209
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 003070

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
OSD FOR SHIVERS
NATO/ISAF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/10/2017

TAGS: PREF PREL PHUM AF IR

SUBJECT: UNHCR FEARS NEW WAVE OF AFGHAN DEPORTATIONS FROM
IRAN

REF: KABUL 02324

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Jerry Howard for reasons 1.4
(B) and (D)

¶11. (C) The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office here fears Iran is about to announce a "No Go" policy for Sistan Va Baluchestan province that would force resident Afghans to either relocate to remote refugee camps or repatriate, triggering a humanitarian crisis on both sides of the border. An International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) contact believes Iran plans to target only illegal immigrants who would be deported at a manageable rate.

¶12. (C) According to UNHCR, on September 13, Iran plans to declare Sistan Va Baluchestan province a "No Go" area. All foreign residents of the province, regardless of immigration status, must decide by September 23 whether to relocate to a refugee camp in Iran or repatriate; they will have four months to act on their decision. Iran has already deported 200,000 people since April 21. UNHCR is developing its official response but has informally urged the Iranian government to abandon or modify the &No Go8 declaration.

¶13. (C) An ISAF Deputy Political Advisor (German national) met with the Iranian Deputy Chief of Mission in Kabul September ¶12. According to the D/POLAD, the DCM said Iran intends to target only illegal immigrants (not refugees), some of whom the Iranians allege are Afghan narco- and human-traffickers and religious extremists. The policy will apply to various districts in 19 Iranian provinces, not just in Sistan Va Baluchestan. The Iranian DCM told D/POLAD Iran has no interest in troubling the Karzai government with a huge influx of returnees or undermining its own economy, which depends on the cheap labor provided by Afghan refugees. Deportations of illegals would be under the 1,000/week limit agreed to in a recently-signed MOU between Iran and Afghanistan.

¶14. (SBU) Comment: We will follow-up with Afghan authorities to determine if they are anticipating any increase in returnees from Iran.

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